

Warfighting CINCs in a New Era

By JOSEPH W. PRUEHER

Shortly after the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986, Admiral Ronald J. Hays, commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), called the law a “profound document.” In his view, it codified “relationships, procedures, and authority that every unified commander ought to have had even before the act was passed.” He praised the legislation for clearly putting unified commanders in charge of designated areas of responsibility and making them accountable.

CINCs confront regions in which the range and pace of operations have increased

Congress drafted the reorganization legislation with a Cold War paradigm as the backdrop. It expected the act to strengthen the ability of the Pentagon to deter and defeat Soviet aggression. However, the payoff of Goldwater-Nichols came about in a different security environment. Today the geographic CINCs confront less stable, more dynamic regions in which the range and pace of military operations have increased. Furthermore, the pace and importance of peacetime activities have placed added burdens on unified command staffs and forces.

Despite these myriad changes, the Goldwater-Nichols prescriptions for unified commands fit this new era as well as they did the old one. Jointness is strongly rooted in

PACOM planning and actions. For PACOM, the demise of the Soviet threat over the last decade has not diminished the fundamental significance of the Goldwater-Nichols Act as joint operators and relations with other service staffs evolve to the right level.

Jointness in PACOM

Earlier this year, the People's Republic of China (PRC) conducted a series of large-scale military exercises along their coastline opposite Taiwan. Although Washington did not believe that China intended to use military force directly, it assessed the exercises as provocative and publicly denounced them. The United States made it clear that it would oppose attempts by either Beijing or Taipei to forcibly change the status quo. When PRC ballistic missile tests were announced close to Taiwanese ports—30 kilometers north, 50 kilometers southwest—PACOM responded by sending the *USS Independence* carrier battle group to the vicinity. This force deployed in support of the basic U.S. interest of maintaining peace and stability in the region. On May 23, despite PRC exercises and missile tests, Taiwan conducted the first popular election of a Chinese leader in history.

This measured but firm action on the part of PACOM, intended to encourage restraint from both parties, was possible largely because of the clear chain of command established by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Communication channels efficiently supported the chain of command. Direct discussions between the Chairman and CINC ensured that theater assessments and recommendations were represented in the interagency process, and decisions by the National Command Authorities were passed along precisely as intended.

Within theater, the Joint Intelligence Center Pacific (JICPAC)—the PACOM multiservice intelligence fusion center—played a major role in assessing the situation. Its products were among those forwarded to and used by defense and other officials in formulating U.S. response options. JICPAC and counterpart organizations in other unified commands exemplify increased

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U.S. Navy

USS Rainier replenishing HMAS Sydney and USCGC Sherman.

Responsibility-Authority Mismatch

When I was commander in chief of U.S. Southern Command in the mid-1980s, President Reagan's decisions to train Salvadoran forces in the United States as well as Honduras and deploy U.S. troops to Honduras sharply divided Congress. With all the services scheduled to participate, disagreements also arose at the Pentagon. This deployment was an "unprogrammed requirement" for the services, disrupting plans and diverting funds from other activities. Indecorous squabbling broke out among the Joint Staff and service staffs in Washington which demanded more time and effort from my staff in Panama than did coping with problems in Central America.

My headquarters staff included fewer than 150 officers, with an average rank of captain or major. There were two other assigned flag officers: an Air Force two-star and an Army one-star. The former was my air component commander and the latter headed my land component and the brigade which defended the canal. My maritime component commander was a Navy captain.

Each component commander reported to a four-star service commander in the United States for funds, personnel matters, and guidance on priorities. Those service commanders established the length of temporary duty for servicemembers, constrained flying hours per month for aircraft in theater, set training objectives, and controlled allocations for base support and maintenance. Time and again their wishes took precedence over mine. Hence, I became a staunch advocate of reforms to assign genuine authority to each regional CINCPAC commensurate with his responsibilities.

—General Paul F. Gorman, USA (Ret.)

emphasis on jointly produced, all-source intelligence for joint force commanders. Joint intelligence centers, created primarily from service component resources, are fully consistent with Goldwater-Nichols.

Two-Tiered Command and Control

Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, enables combatant commanders to "directly control the conduct of military operations," as General Schwarzkopf did in the Persian Gulf War, or "delegate that authority

and responsibility to a subordinate commander." To address the need for responsive and efficient joint actions on the operational level—where strategic requirements are connected to tactical activities—PACOM instituted a two-tiered command and control (C²) concept in 1991 under Admiral Charles Larson. Put simply, a specific short-term mission is assigned to a joint task force (JTF) commander who reports directly to CINCPAC.

Admiral Larson explained the rationale for this system: "During the Cold War, each service had a theater-wide commander in the operational chain, interposing three headquarters between me and the troops in the field. We've developed a new organization to deal with the most likely threat of the future—regional contingencies." He stated in his end of tour report that, "Nothing we've accomplished in PACOM over the last three years has contributed more to the jointness, readiness, and agility of my forces than the implementation of the two-tiered C² structure."

Improving on the lessons learned from employing the two-tiered command and control concept, PACOM uses three interrelated measures to ensure JTF success. First, potential JTF headquarters are preselected. Commands so designated include I and III Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs), Third and Seventh Fleets, I Corps, Alaska Command, and Special Operations Command, Pacific. Second, pre-designated commanders and staffs participate in CINCPAC-assisted seminars and exercises to practice crisis action procedures as a JTF headquarters. Third, the CINCPAC staff, assisted by service

CH-47s during
CJTFEX '96.



II MEF Combat Camera (A. Olguin)

RAAF personnel
positioning cannon
during Pitch Black '96,
northern Australia.



U.S. Air Force (Val Gempis)

component and supporting CINCs, both staffs and trains a cadre of roughly 150 potential augmentees. A tailored group of about 40 personnel, selected from this cadre, would augment the JTF staff in a crisis.

By predesignating JTF headquarters, commanders and staffs of single-service commands can take a forehanded approach to preparing for joint operations. These existing commanders and staffs know the area, people, and issues but are staffed, trained, and equipped to function only as service tactical and operational headquarters. Accordingly, they require personnel augmentation, JTF-specific training, and some added equipment to function as JTFs on short notice.

The training program includes a cycle of seminars, command post exercises (CPXs), and field training exercises (FTXs) that help a single-service

JTF training creates the trust needed for full and rapid assimilation

staff to report directly to the unified command level and control joint operations. Tailored for a designated command based on an assessment of its joint mission essential task list (JMETL), training normally includes headquarters-wide topics such as crisis

action planning and JTF organization as well as specialized coverage of joint intelligence, logistics, and personnel management.

The augmentees who will round out JTF staffs during crises support much of this training. Repetitive support from trainers/mentors during seminars, CPXs, and FTXs not only makes these augmentees proficient but promotes standardization across

PACOM. Finally, since these specially trained officers and NCOs bring expertise and skills to JTF commanders, not

as liaison officers but as integrated staff members, JTF training creates the trust needed for full and rapid assimilation.

Feedback from commanders and external evaluators confirms the soundness of this "train the way you'll fight" concept and JTF preparation measures. After a recent PACOM-sponsored CPX (Tempest Express 96-3) at Fort Lewis, Lieutenant General Glenn

Marines landing on
Kauai, Hawaii, during
RIMPAC '96.



U.S. Navy (Jeffrey S. Vance)

Marsh, the commanding general of I Corps, observed, "I am more convinced than ever that this type of joint training is some of the best and most useful that we do, and it goes a long way toward building the personal and professional relationships among our staffs which are necessary for success."

Although PACOM has advanced its thinking related to training needs on both of these tiers, JTF training is clearly work in progress. Acting closely with U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM), the future JTF training picture will result in a more efficient and effective program to capitalize on ACOM investments and capabilities for PACOM theater-specific JTF training and augmentation experience.

For example, combining ACOM core JTF train-up with theater-specific CPXs/FTXs would expose staffs to standardized instruction while focusing on region-unique scenarios, environments, and plans. CPXs reaching back electronically to the Joint Training Analysis and Simulation Center in Suffolk, Virginia, would not only be more efficient in some aspects but allow a JTF commander and staff to conduct joint/combined operations using organic C⁴I systems from deployed locations. This is particularly critical for afloat staffs of the Third and Seventh

Fleets and other JTFs working in coalition scenarios.

While the theater staff benefits from participation in JTF exercises, scheduling difficulties may preclude the unified command level from becoming fully involved. A simulated or "virtual staff" could readily substitute for an engaged headquarters or even facilitate multiple, simultaneous distributed JTF exercises.

Theater staffs will normally cover overhead issues such as scenario development, exercise control, role playing, and evaluation with in-house personnel. Drawing on the ACOM training orientation, the theater CINC's staff would be freed from some routine exercise overhead. Both tiers—unified command and JTF headquarters—could then fully engage in the exercise play.

Cross-Department Assignments

We must broaden the joint officer management system to complement the progress made in training to include the second tier, JTFs. Although unified command staffs benefitted from Goldwater-Nichols improvements in joint personnel management, JTF staffs did not. While we charge JTFs

with a tremendous number of joint warfighting tasks, they remain predominantly single-service manned. The next step should push joint personnel manning to JTF-level operators, concurrent with a scrub of real joint billets.

In PACOM exercise after-action reporting, JTF commanders highlighted a need for resident sister-service expertise to complement the infusion of joint personnel they receive during crisis augmentation. The PACOM solution is an interdepartmental exchange of officers at the major/lieutenant colonel and lieutenant commander/commander levels. These officers would be assigned to key billets to provide potential JTF commanders daily access to experts in sister-service capabilities, limitations, and employment doctrine. U.S. Central Command recently implemented a similar exchange focused at the service component level.

Cross-service assignment programs already exist, primarily in the functional area of tactical fire support. For example, the Air Force assigns air liaison officers and tactical control parties to Army units at various levels, and the Army allots ground liaison officers to Air Force fighter and airlift units. Other programs support cross-service attachment on a mission basis such as Marine air-naval gunfire liaison and naval fire support officers to Army units.

A workable concept would involve one to three officers per service on each potential JTF staff. The exchanges would be zero-sum actions. Staffs gain the same number they provide. Assigned full-time exchange officers would work routine actions but spend most of their time on joint matters. This influx of service expertise will make JTF staffs more responsive in initial crisis action planning and more effective in integrating joint capabilities during mission execution.

Such assignments would provide joint experience and meet the intent of Goldwater-Nichols with respect to joint duty. Accordingly, they should be favorably considered as joint billets by the joint duty assignment list (JDAL) review board. Once the billets are added to the list, the services can give joint service credit to officers who fill them.

This concept meets the Goldwater-Nichols goal of enhancing the effectiveness of military operations with the current reality that they are and will continue to be conducted through JTFs. Used in conjunction with a JTF augmentation, cross-department staffing of predesignated JTF headquarters would reduce the turbulence of ad hoc attachment during the critical initial phase of a contingency.

Resource Allocation

Two-tiered command and control as well as cross-service assignments represent advances in the joint agenda. The defense resource allocation system also continues to evolve and gain fame because every American identifies with its bottom line—the dollar.

Today the resource allocation process blends the intent of Goldwater-Nichols by providing for more efficient use of defense resources and assigning clear responsibility and commensurate authority to CINCs. The Vice Chairman heads the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC),

Recent JROC staff visits to CINCs, intended to solicit front-end and mid-course recommendations, have increased CINC participation in the studies well before they were called on to vote.

CINCs must engage appropriately in the resource allocation process to procure tomorrow's forces while maintaining their respective fundamental command warfighting focus on employing today's forces. This involves balancing current and future readiness, which both fall within their purview. As warfighters, CINCs have to ask for what they need to accomplish their missions, but not more. They must state their requirements precisely so their instructions are not used to support every conceivable program. Insatiable appetites for more, new, and faster things do not help—and hedging on “more is better” is not the answer either.

Two modifications in the resource allocation process would enable the unified commands to provide better input. First, the Vice Chairman recommended a standardized format for CINC integrated priority lists—an inventory of the combatant commander's highest priority require-

ments across service and functional lines and defining shortfalls in key programs. This will allow JROC to more clearly identify CINC consensus, which would add potency to the Chairman's advice to the Secretary of Defense on requirements, programs, and budgets. A format that provides a rank ordering from one to twenty-five with only one “system” per rank would force the hard choices. After all, resource allocation boils down to tough decisions on offsets.

This leads to the second recommendation. Future JWCA teams should identify alternatives and present associated impacts—that is, cost savings and resulting shortfalls—to allow CINCs to make better informed choices. Eventually, as analyses mature and JWCAs begin cross-functional studies, such an approach will be necessary to assess macro offsets to support our mutual goals.

Beyond doubt, Goldwater-Nichols has been, and continues to be, a positive influence on unified commands and the resulting joint awareness and culture. The act's intent for a clear chain of command has been evident in the application of supporting policies and doctrine, as the recent crisis in the Taiwan Strait and every contingency over the past decade has underscored. Other intentions—such as improving the military advice the Chairman provides to civilian leaders, placing clear responsibility and authority for mission accomplishment on the combatant commander, using defense resources more efficiently, and improving the joint officer personnel management system—have been equally successful.

There is, however, room for refinement even where much has been achieved. Preparing JTFs for contingency operations, improving the input of the CINCs to the resource allocation process, and evolving to the correct balance for CINC responsibility and accountability for both a long- and near-term view of his AOR are three such areas. As Admiral Hays prophesied in 1988, “I believe that it will be another five, perhaps even ten years before the full impact of Goldwater-Nichols sets in.” His call was about right.

JFQ

CINCs have to ask for what they need to accomplish their missions, but not more

which helps the Chairman develop programmatic advice for civilian leaders. The former as well as current Vice Chairmen, Admiral Bill Owens and General Joe Ralston, have made concerted efforts to incorporate CINC inputs to the Chairman's advice.

As the JROC process evolves, CINCs will have enhanced opportunities for “front-end” inputs while deciding what to do. For example, CINCs report readiness shortfalls to the Chairman through the joint monthly readiness review (JMRR). Historically, some 75 percent of JMRR issues require programmatic rather than operational solutions. The Chairman directed that such programmatic issues flow directly into the resource allocation system. The entry point will be the joint warfare capabilities assessments (JWCA), analytical efforts that support JROC.